薔薇十字探偵の憂鬱②

# 百器徒然袋

ひゃっきつれづれぶくろ

## 鳴釜

なりかま

原作 京極夏彦
作画 志水アキ

怪

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# HYAKKI-TSUREZURE-BUKURO

## The Melancholy of the Rose Cross Detective Agency & The Case of the Singing Iron Pot

Story by:
KYOUGOKU NATSUHIKO

Art by:
SHIMIZU AKI

# About The Series

This manga is based on the works of one of Japan's most celebrated modern writers, Kyougoku Natsuhiko. His novels pull from Japanese folklore, history, psychology, linguistics and philosophy. His best-known series is probably "Hyakkiyagyou," which is more commonly known as the "Kyougokudou" series after its eponymous protagonist. The first Kyougokudou novel, "Ubume no Natsu," has been published in English by Vertical as "The Summer of the Ubume." The translation is excellent and I highly recommend it if you're a fan of dark, psychological murder mysteries. The second novel, "Moryou no Hako," was animated in 2007. Despite quality animation and character designs by CLAMP, the anime is relatively unknown... Several volumes of the novel series have been turned into manga drawn by Shimizu Aki, and the first three books have been made into movies.

"Hyakki-Tsurezure-Bukuro" is a stand-alone side story to the Kyougokudou series, but it does share many of the same characters. There's surly used bookstore owner and part-time exorcist, Chuuzenji Akihiko, who goes by the nickname "Kyougokudou." (It's actually the name of his bookstore, but since he rarely leaves it, the nickname kinda stuck...) And then there's Enokizu Reijirou, a flaky private eye whose mysterious clairvoyant abilities almost make up for his utter incompetence at detective work. Their wide array of friends, family and acquaintances make up the rest of the recurring cast.

The series is set in 1950s Tokyo, not long after Japan's WWII defeat and subsequent rebuilding, so cultural change and the phantoms of war produce an environment that's simultaneously hopeful and oppressive. The "demons" that Kyougokudou faces are representations of the mental afflictions of modern life, given supernatural weight by traditional beliefs. Kyougokudou is as much a psychologist as an exorcist, but he really just wishes people would leave him alone with his books...

## Note

The title of this story comes from the "Gazu Hyakki Tsurezure Bukuro," a 1781 illustrated field guide of supernatural creatures drawn by artist Toriyama Sekien. "Narikama," or "Iron Pot Demon," is the name of one of the demons appearing in the guide. A Narikama is a spirit that takes the form of an iron cooking pot, and when the pot is struck it makes a ringing sound that's said to bring good luck. The "Rose Cross Detective Agency" is an obvious nod to the ancient secret society of the Rosicrucians, which gave rise to the better-known Freemasons.

## TRIGGER WARNING

This volume involves the investigation of a rape case.

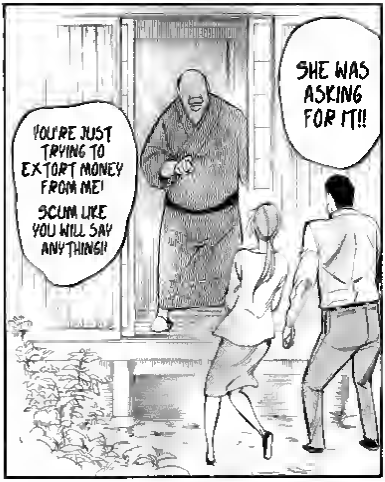
TRANSLATION & TYPESETTING BY
SANADA

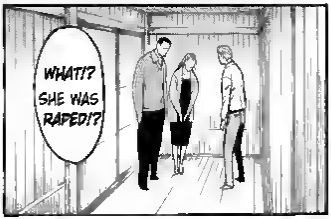
RAW PROVIDER
HTTP://WWW.RAWMANGADDL.COM/

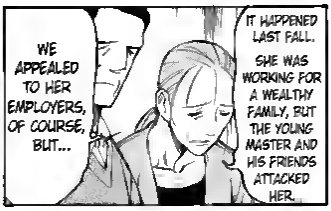
WHEN YOU THINK OF A GREAT DETECTIVE ...
YOU THINK OF SOMEONE WITH AN INCREDIBLE DEDUCTIVE MIND AND THE SKILL TO TACKLE ANY CASE
SOMEONE WITH A CLEAR AND PIERCING INTELLECT. LIKE SHERLOCK HOLMES.
OR AT LEAST THAT'S HOW I IMAGINED A GREAT DETECTIVE WOULD BE.
UNTIL ...
I MET HIM.
Chapter 1

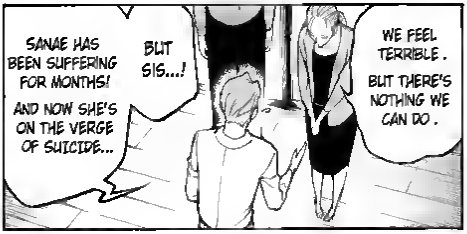
STORY BY NATSUHIKO KYOUGOKU
ART BY AKI SHIMUZU
THE CASE OF THE SINGING IRON POT
HYAKKI-TSUREZURE-BUKURO
ONE HUNDRED DEMONS: A MIXED BAG
The Melancholy of the Rose Cross Detective Agency

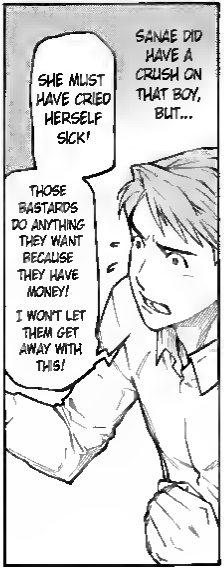
I'VE JUST LEARNED THAT MY NIECE, SANAE, TRIED TO COMMIT SUICIDE.


SHE WAS ASKING FOR IT!!
YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO EXTORT MONEY FROM ME!
SCUM LIKE YOU WILL SAY ANYTHING!

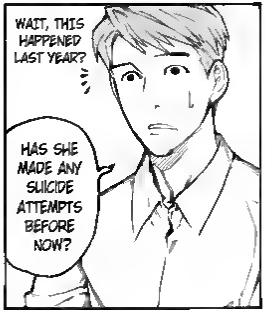

WHAT!?
SHE WAS RAPED!?

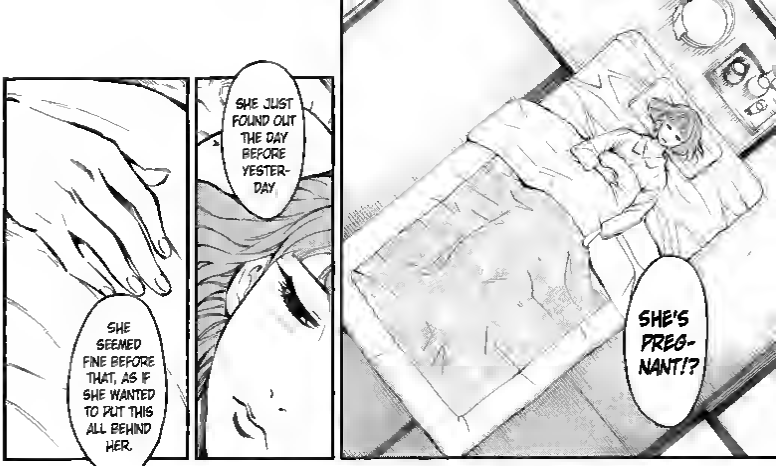

WE APPEALED TO HER EMPLOYERS, OF COURSE, BUT...
IT HAPPENED LAST FALL.
SHE WAS WORKING FOR A WEALTHY FAMILY, BUT THE YOUNG MASTER AND HIS FRIENDS ATTACKED HER.


SANAE HAS BEEN SUFFERING FOR MONTHS!
AND NOW SHE'S ON THE VERGE OF SUICIDE...
BUT SIS...!
WE FEEL TERRIBLE.
BUT THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO.

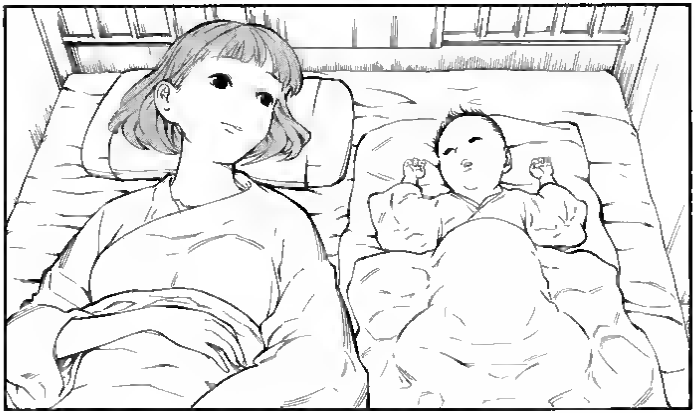

SANAE DID HAVE A CRUSH ON THAT BOY, BUT...
SHE MUST HAVE CRIED HERSELF SICK!
THOSE BASTARDS DO ANYTHING THEY WANT BECAUSE THEY HAVE MONEY!
I WON'T LET THEM GET AWAY WITH THIS!

NO, BUT...

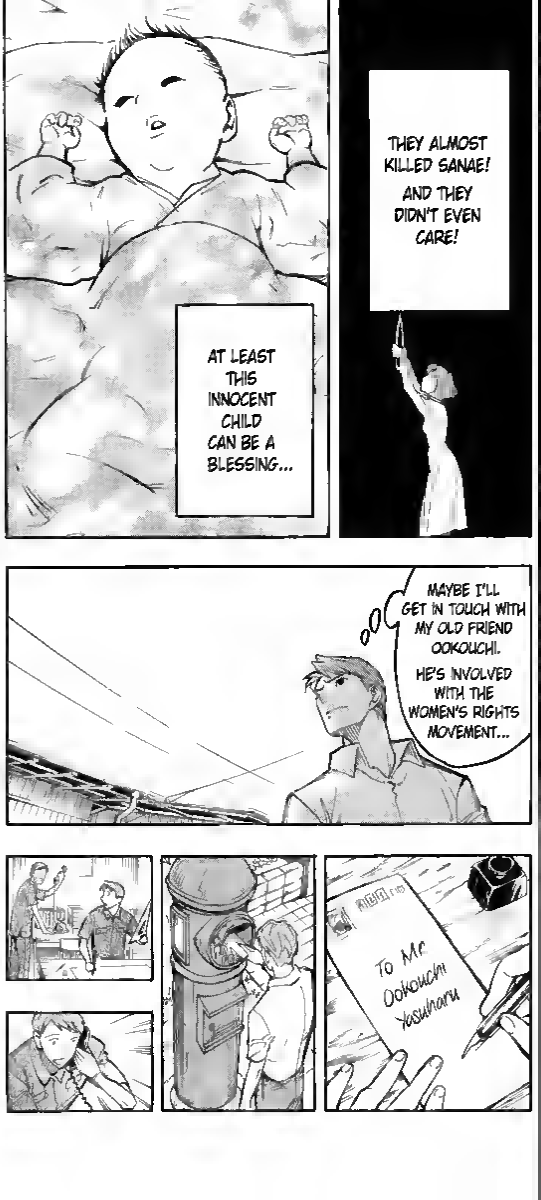

WAIT, THIS HAPPENED LAST YEAR?
HAS SHE MADE ANY SUICIDE ATTEMPTS BEFORE NOW?


SHE'S PREG-NANT!?
SHE JUST FOUND OUT THE DAY BEFORE YESTER-DAY
SHE SEEMED FINE BEFORE THAT, AS IF SHE WANTED TO PUT THIS ALL BEHIND HER.

Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology
FIVE MONTHS LATER...

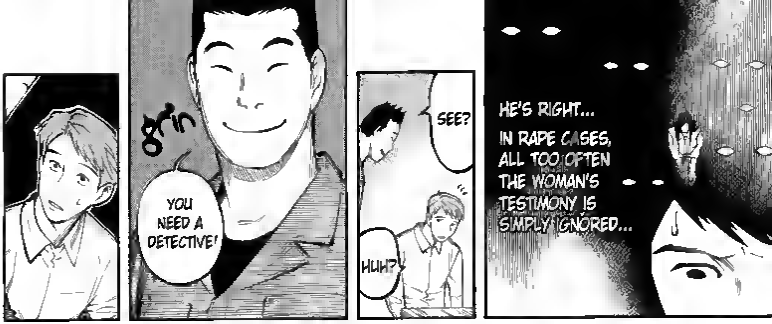


AND NOW THAT I'M HER MOTHER, I'M GOING TO DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO PROTECT THIS LITTLE GIRL.
...I'VE MADE UP MY MIND.
SHE'S JUST A BABY, SO NONE OF THIS IS HER FAULT.
I'M GOING TO NAME HER "KOZUE."
THIS STILL ALL FEELS SO WRONG...
IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING, SANAE PULLED THROUGH, AND SHE GAVE BIRTH TO A BABY GIRL
BUT YOU'RE STILL JUST A LITTLE GIRL TO ME...
MY SISTER IS OLDER THAN I AM, SO SANAE AND I WERE MUCH CLOSER IN AGE.
WE GREW UP MORE LIKE WE WERE BROTHER AND SISTER.

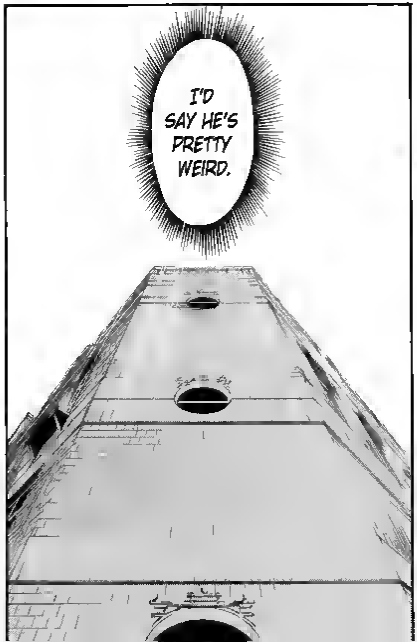

AT LEAST THIS INNOCENT CHILD CAN BE A BLESSING...
THEY ALMOST KILLED SANAE!
AND THEY DIDN'T EVEN CARE!
I'LL NEVER FORGIVE THOSE BASTARDS!
MAYBE I'LL GET IN TOUCH WITH MY OLD FRIEND OOKOUCHI.
HE'S INVOLVED WITH THE WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT...
To Mr Ookouchi Yasuharu

IT COULD TURN INTO ONE OF THOSE "HE SAID, SHE SAID" SITUATIONS,
YOU KNOW?
A LAWYER CAN'T PROVE YOUR CASE WITHOUT EVIDENCE!
SO YOU CAN'T GO MAKING PUBLIC ACCUSATIONS JUST YET, OR THINGS COULD GET EVEN TOUGHER FOR YOUR NIECE
YOU NEED THE FACTS!
I SEE

**NOTE** Unfortunately 1950s Japan was a rough place to be a woman. Although women had started to break into the workforce and demand greater legal protection during the Taisho Era (1912-1926), WWII set the women's rights movement back by decades. Women were given the right to vote in 1947, but in practice they were often still treated as second-class citizens. It would have been very difficult for a woman to bring a rape case against a man, especially one of higher social status. Even if rape could be proven, it was rarely punished with jail time.

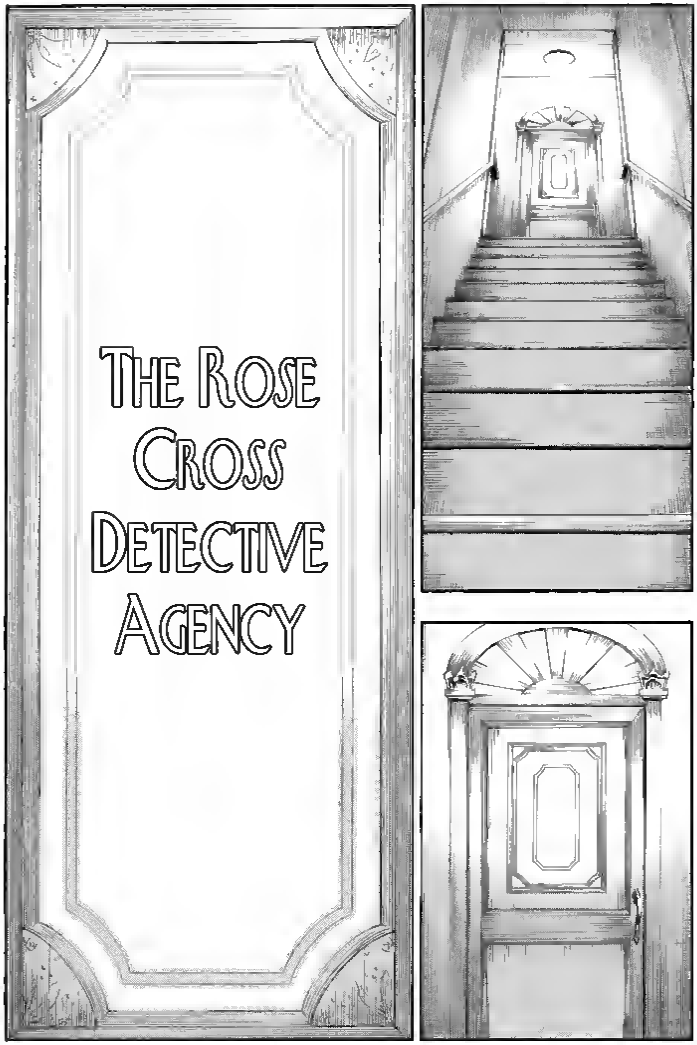

HE'S RIGHT...
IN RAPE CASES, ALL TOO OFTEN THE WOMAN'S TESTIMONY IS SIMPLY IGNORED...
SEE?
HUH?
grin
YOU NEED A DETECTIVE!

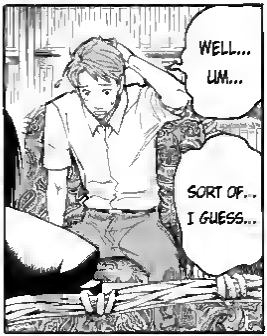
HIS NAME IS ENOKIZU REIJIROU.
HE AND I WENT TO HIGH SCHOOL TOGETHER
COME ON, JUST TALK TO HIM. YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO LOSE.


I'D SAY HE'S PRETTY WEIRD.

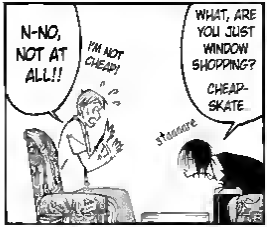
HMM.. I GUESS IF I WERE TO DESCRIBE HIM..
WHAT KIND OF PERSON IS HE?

I HOPE I'M NOT MAKING A BIG MISTAKE..
TOO!

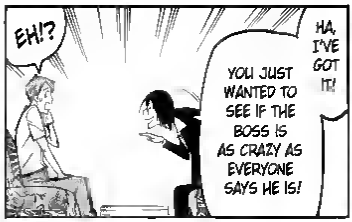

The Rose
Cross
Detective
Agency


WELL... UM...
SORT OF... I GUESS...

SO...
YOU WANNA DISCUSS A CASE WITH THE BOSS?
ASSISTANT: MASUDA RYUUICHI


N-NO, NOT AT ALL!!
I'M NOT CHEAP!
WHAT, ARE YOU JUST WINDOW SHOPPING? CHEAP-SKATE
Hmmm

SMIRK

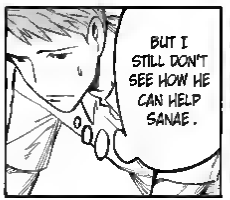

EH!?
YOU JUST WANTED TO SEE IF THE BOSS IS AS CRAZY AS EVERYONE SAYS HE IS!
HA, I'VE GOT IT!

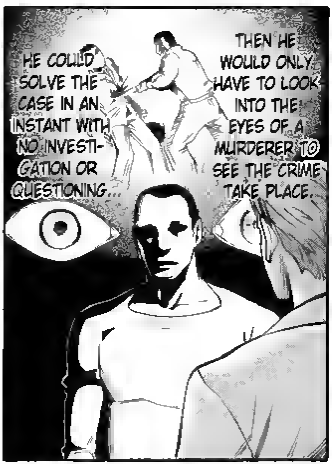
IT'S JUST... UM... HOW DO I PUT THIS...
I'M NOT EVEN SURE WHAT I'M ASKING FOR...

BUT ENOKIZU-SAN IS GETTING PRETTY FAMOUS THESE DAYS.
IT'S GOT TO BE A REALLY INTERESTING CASE TO GET HIS ATTENTION
FLAIL
NO!! THAT'S NOT IT!!
FLAIL
HE HE HE
JOKING, JOKING!
I MEAN HE DOESN'T LISTEN TO CLIENTS
HE DOESN'T NEED TO
WHAT DO YOU MEAN HE DOESN'T LISTEN TO CLIENTS!?
NOPE HE DOESN'T LISTEN TO CLIENTS
UM... WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE FOR ME TO TALK TO ENOKIZU-SAN DIRECTLY, THEN?
.....?
HE CAN SEE MEMORIES...?
IT'S NOT AN ACQUIRED SKILL.
IT'S JUST HOW HIS BRAIN WORKS
LIKE A MENTAL DISORDER
HE CAN SEE PEOPLE'S MEMORIES.
WELL, ACTU-ALLY...
YUP.
UM.. SO DOES HE USE HIS AMAZING POWERS OF DEDUCTIVE REASONING TO FIGURE OUT WHY PEOPLE WANT TO HIRE HIM...?

BUT WHEN HE LOOKS AT SOMEONE, IT'S LIKE HE SEES A LITTLE SCENE FROM THEIR PAST.
NOT THAT I REALLY KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON IN THAT LUNATIC'S HEAD!
OH, BUT HE CAN'T HEAR ANYTHING, SO IT'S LIKE A MOVIE WITH NO SOUND

SO.. HE'S SOME KIND OF MIND READER?
HM
NOT QUITE WHEN IT COMES TO EMOTIONS, FOR INSTANCE, THAT GUY IS COMPLETELY DENSE
HE JUST DOESN'T THINK THE WAY NORMAL PEOPLE DO
MAYBE THINGS LIKE THAT DON'T INTEREST HIM





HE COULD SOLVE THE CASE IN AN INSTANT WITH NO INVESTI-GATION OR QUESTIONING...
THEN HE WOULD ONLY HAVE TO LOOK INTO THE EYES OF A MURDERER TO SEE THE CRIME TAKE PLACE.

**NOTE** In "Uburne no Natsu" Kyougokudou describes Enokizu's abilities as being similar to those of an *itako*, one of the blind traditional shamans of northern Japan. Itako gain supernatural abilities by channeling gods and spirits through their bodies. Enokizu channels memories instead. Incidentally, Enokizu is blind in his left eye thanks to a wartime accident involving a flare gun that blew up in his face, and it's implied that his remaining vision is poor

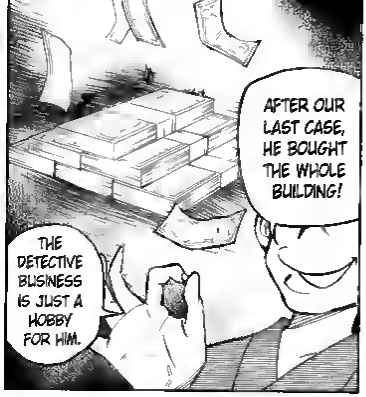
OI, MASUDA-KUN, QUIT BOTHERING THE CUSTOMER.
HE HE HE HE
NOT REALLY.
EH...
I WASN'T BOTHERING HIM, KAZUTORA-SAN...
I WAS JUST MAKING A LITTLE JOKE!
LAUGHTER IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL, YOU KNOW?
HERE.
OH, THANKS.
EH? UM I SUPPOSE
RIGHT?
ER, NO!!!
THERE'S NO POINT IN TRYING TO HAVE A SERIOUS CONVERSATION WITH HIM.
HE'S AN IDIOT.
HE'S TALKING LIKE HE OUTRANKS MASUDA-SAN... BUT THEN WHY IS HE THE ONE SERVING TEA?

**NOTE** Japanese has a complicated set of honorifics that are used to define relationships between people. "-san" is a respectful honorific, but "-kun" is used for people of lower age or status. The narrator notes how strange it is for Masuda, an adult, to refer to Kazutora, a child, with "-san" while Kazutora calls him Masuda-kun.

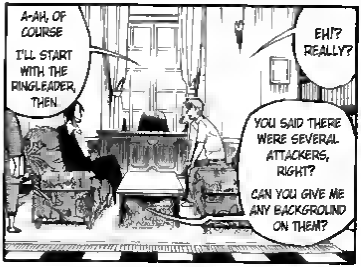
IS THAT INSUBORDINATION I HEAR, MASUDA-KUN?
HMPF
OH NOOO, I'M NOT CUT OUT FOR THIS LINE OF WORK AT ALL.
YOU'RE GETTING TO BE JUST AS ANNOYING AS THE BOSS
ARE YOU TRYING TO TAKE OVER THE BUSINESS?
YOU'D BETTER WATCH OUT.
I CAN'T HELP IT! THIS IS JUST WHO I AM! CHEERFUL AND OPEN-HEARTED, THAT'S ME!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? I'M JUST MAKING SOME INQUIRIES ABOUT THE CASE.
THEN WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?
NONSENSE, MY HEARING IS GREAT! MY EARDRUMS ARE AS TOUGH AS TAIKO DRUMS.
IF YOU KEEP STICKING YOUR FINGER IN THERE, IT'S NO WONDER YOU'RE DEAF.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE HEARING! LEMME CLEAN MY EARS.
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
BUT HOW CAN A DETECTIVE OPERATE WITHOUT QUESTIONING WITNESSES?
EH...?
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU NOT TO QUESTION THE WITNESSES!?
AW, KAZUTORA-SAN, YOU SOUND LIKE ENOKIZU-SAN!
!?
SWOOP
TURN

EVERY-BODY CHILL OUT!
UM... I... UM... EXCUSE ME.
!?
?
WELL.
THEN I'LL HANDLE THE INVESTIGATIONS
HE CAN'T COMPLAIN ABOUT THAT, CAN HE?
YOU KNOW HE'S JUST LAZY.
SO WE'RE NOT ACCEPTING ANY NEW CASES
SIP
EH? BUT WHAT ABOUT ENOKIZU-SAN?
HE'S USELESS.
HE'S BEEN IN A SLUMP LATELY.
MAYBE HE'S GOT A TOOTH-ACHE?
COME ON, LET'S HEAR HIM OUT.
OKAY? I WANNA KNOW THE FACTS OF THE CASE
I CAN'T TAKE THE JOB IF I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON.
IF WE DON'T WORK, WHO'S GOING TO PAY THE RENT?
AS IF THE BOSS IS WORRIED ABOUT THAT!
HA HA HA

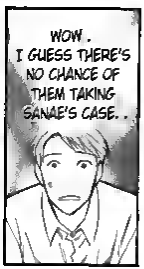
YEAH, OUR LAST CASE WAS PRETTY WILD...
AND THE CLIENT WAS LOADED!
HE... HE REALLY BOUGHT THE ENTIRE BUILDING?


AFTER OUR LAST CASE, HE BOUGHT THE WHOLE BUILDING!
THE DETECTIVE BUSINESS IS JUST A HOBBY FOR HIM.

HE HE HE
HA HA
WE DO GET SOME CRAZY CLIENTS, HAHA!


A-AH, OF COURSE
I'LL START WITH THE RINGLEADER, THEN.
EH!? REALLY?
YOU SAID THERE WERE SEVERAL ATTACKERS, RIGHT?
CAN YOU GIVE ME ANY BACKGROUND ON THEM?

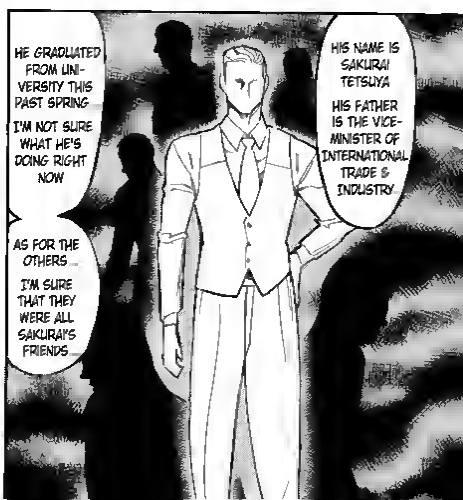
OKAY.
I'M ON THE CASE!


WOW. I GUESS THERE'S NO CHANCE OF THEM TAKING SANAE'S CASE..

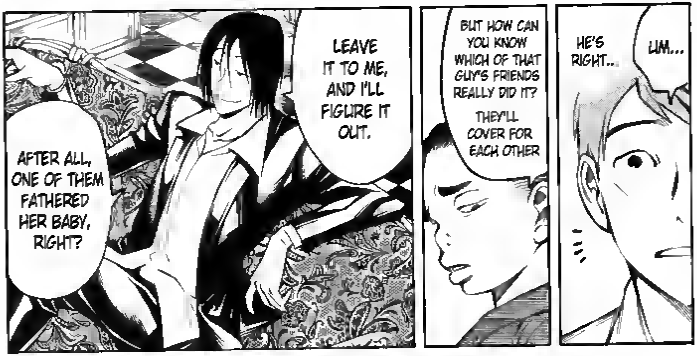
WHY NOT?

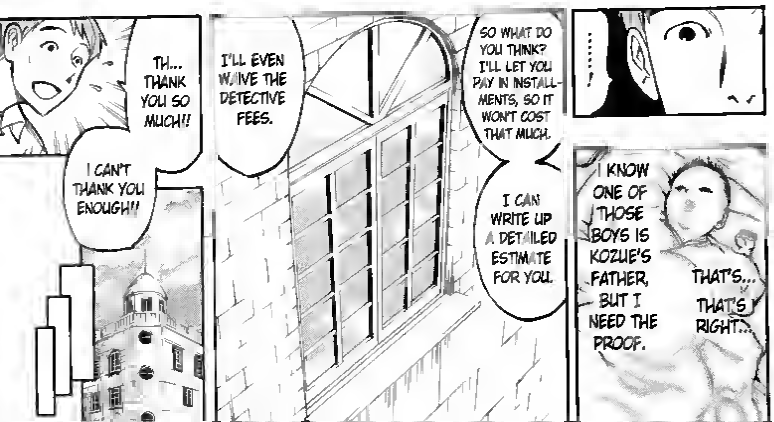
BUT WHAT CAN I DO?
I CAN'T JUST MAKE AN ACCUSATION

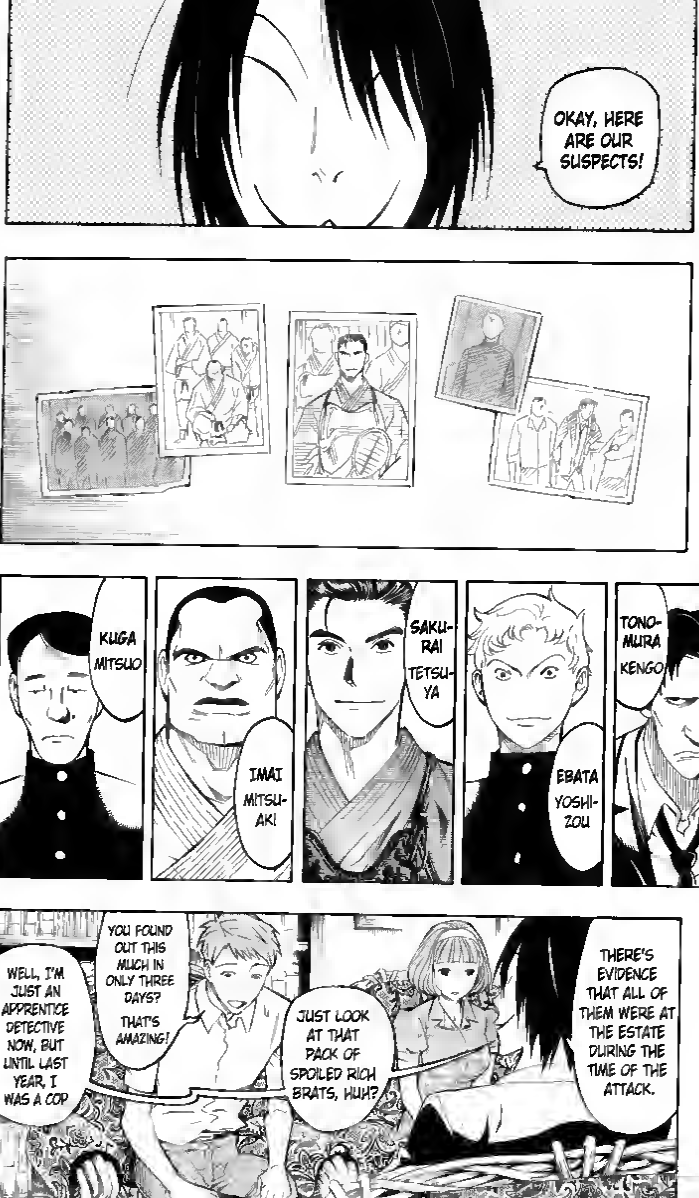
I'M NOT TEASING!
Y... YOU'RE TEASING ME AGAIN, AREN'T YOU?


HE GRADUATED FROM UNIVERSITY THIS PAST SPRING
I'M NOT SURE WHAT HE'S DOING RIGHT NOW
AS FOR THE OTHERS...
I'M SURE THAT THEY WERE ALL SAKURAI'S FRIENDS...
HIS NAME IS SAKURAI TETSUYA
HIS FATHER IS THE VICE-MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE & INDUSTRY

I WANNA MAKE THE BASTARD PAY FOR WHAT HE DID TOO.
THAT WON'T ERASE WHAT HAPPENED, BUT AT LEAST IT MIGHT GIVE YOUR NIECE SOME PEACE OF MIND, YA KNOW?
BUT IT'S UP TO YOU.
SORRY, SORRY.
I REALLY MEAN THAT.


LEAVE IT TO ME, AND I'LL FIGURE IT OUT.
AFTER ALL, ONE OF THEM FATHERED HER BABY, RIGHT?
BUT HOW CAN YOU KNOW WHICH OF THAT GUY'S FRIENDS REALLY DID IT?
THEY'LL COVER FOR EACH OTHER
HE'S RIGHT...
UM...


TH... THANK YOU SO MUCH!!
I CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH!!
I'LL EVEN WAIVE THE DETECTIVE FEES.
SO WHAT DO YOU THINK? I'LL LET YOU PAY IN INSTALLMENTS, SO IT WON'T COST THAT MUCH.
I CAN WRITE UP A DETAILED ESTIMATE FOR YOU.
.....?
I KNOW ONE OF THOSE BOYS IS KOZUE'S FATHER, BUT I NEED THE PROOF.
THAT'S... THAT'S RIGHT...


OKAY, HERE ARE OUR SUSPECTS!
KUGA MITSUO
IMAI MITSU-AKI
SAKU-RAI TETSU-YA
EBATA YOSHI-ZOU
TONO-MURA KENGO
WELL, I'M JUST AN APPRENTICE DETECTIVE NOW, BUT UNTIL LAST YEAR, I WAS A COP
YOU FOUND OUT THIS MUCH IN ONLY THREE DAYS? THAT'S AMAZING!
JUST LOOK AT THAT PACK OF SPOILED RICH BRATS, HUH?
THERE'S EVIDENCE THAT ALL OF THEM WERE AT THE ESTATE DURING THE TIME OF THE ATTACK.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT
I NEVER THOUGHT ANYONE WOULD CATCH THEM..
SANAE-SAN, YOU KNOW THEM, RIGHT?
YES..
I SAW THEM EVERY DAY WHEN I WAS WORKING
KUGA-SAN WAS ALWAYS NICE TO ME...
BUT HE OFTEN SEEMED TROUBLED..
EH? KAZUTORA-SAN, ARE YOU WITH THE POLICE TOO?
NOPE, BUT HE'S BEEN ENOKIZU-SAN'S SERVANT AND SECRETARY FOR A LONG TIME
COUGH
BUT MASUDA-SAN, WHY DID YOU SINGLE OUT THOSE FOUR?
A MAN LIKE SAKURAI PROBABLY HAS DOZENS OF HANGERS-ON..
ER, SORRY
ALL MEN ARE PIGS!
HE HE HE
HA, BUT YOU CAN'T TRUST ANY OF 'EM.
YEP! THEY'RE A BUNCH OF UNIVERSITY BOYS FRESH OUT OF SCHOOL, SO THEY'VE GOT PLENTY OF MONEY AND PLENTY OF FREE TIME
NATURALLY THEY'RE GOING TO GET TOGETHER TO DRINK AND SMOKE CIGARS
SO I INFILTRATED THEIR LITTLE CLUB.
HEHE, I DID SOME SNOOPING.
IT'S MY SPECIALTY~
HEH HEH
SNOO-PING?

YOU GOTTA KNOW HOW TO HANDLE A WOMAN.
THAT'S WHAT I ALWAYS SAY
IT DON'T MATTER HOW STUCK-UP THE BITCH IS OR HOW MUCH SHE CRIES
YOU GET 'EM ON THEIR BACKS AND THEY ALL BEG FOR MORE
LISTEN UP, MY BROS.
I'LL TELL YA ABOUT ALL THE TIMES I'VE SCORED.

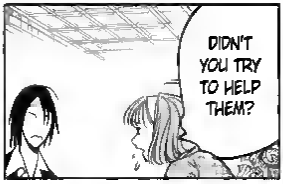
OOOOH
I'VE DONE IT WITH A WIDOW BEHIND THE FUNERAL ALTAR.
OOH
I'VE DONE IT WITH A NURSE IN THE EXAM ROOM.
I LED THEM TO THINK I WAS SOME KIND OF SUPER-PERVERT...
...SO, BASIC-ALLY,
OOOOOOOOOH
I'VE DONE IT WITH A TEACHER AND HER STUDENTS AFTER I TIED THEM UP WITH ROPE...
I'M A NICE GUY, I SWEAR!!
HOW IS THAT APPEA-LING TO ANYONE?
I MEAN...
I HAD TO GAIN THEIR TRUST BY APPEALING TO THEIR INTERESTS, YOU KNOW!?
.....
BUT YOU KNOW I JUST MADE ALL THAT STUFF UP, RIGHT!?
UM...
SHEEH
SANAE, HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE I HEARD YOU LAUGH?
R-RIGHT.
WHOW!
PLEASE, GO ON.
IT'S ALRIGHT, I UNDERSTAND.
THAT'S PART OF YOUR JOB.
JUJU
JUJU
JUJU

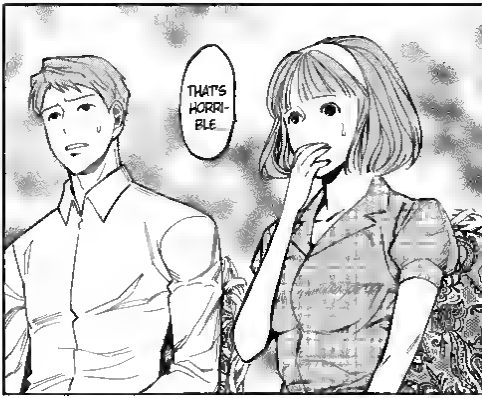
WE'VE DONE IT!
...JUST ABOUT THE ONLY THING I HAVEN'T TRIED YET IS GANG RAPE.
IT'S HARD TO FIND A GROUP OF GUYS WHO KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOING YOU KNOW?
OH YEAH, I HEARD ABOUT THAT! YOU FUCKED TETSUYA-SAN'S MAID, RIGHT?
WHOA, AWESOME!
YEAH, IT WAS LAST YEAR, WASN'T IT?
HAHA, REALLY? SWEET! GIVE ME THE DETAILS, MAN.
YEAH, COME ON!
YEAH, MAN, IT WAS GREAT.
WE ALL GOT TOGETHER AT TETSUYA-SAN'S PLACE. INCLUDING KUGA AND IMAI, THERE WERE FIVE OF US.

S-SORRY. I KNOW THIS HAS GOT TO BE HARD FOR YOU TO HEAR.
I.. I'LL BE FINE. IT'S JUST.
I CAN'T BELIEVE THE NERVE OF THOSE BASTARDS! GETTING DRUNK AND BRAGGING ABOUT WHAT THEY DID TO HER!?
.....
BUT THEN THEY GOT KINDA CARRIED AWAY...
BUT I THINK IT'S BETTER IF I DON'T REPEAT ALL OF THAT
AFTER THAT, SAKURA'S FRIENDS CONTINUED TO BOAST ABOUT THEIR EXPLOITS
ME TOO!
ME TOO!
SWEET! LET'S ALL DO HER!
ME TOO!
OH SHIT, NOW WHAT DO I DO?
YEAH, THERE'S THIS CHICK I'M GONNA GO HOOK UP WITH...
HA HA
BUSY?
SORRY, DUDES, I'M KINDA BUSY...
"COME ON, MAN, WE'RE DOING A BAR CRAWL!"
EH?
SHIT, I'M SO BROKE...

SPLASH
SPLASH
WHO LET THESE FUCKING TRANNY FAGGOTS INTO OUR BAR!?
KIN-CHAN!
KYA AAA!?
KICK
HUH?
NOT THIS SHIT AGAIN...
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING!?

**NOTE** The Japanese slang term for an effeminate gay man or drag queen is "okama" which means "iron pot" | "iron pot" is an earlier slang term for "anus" | These days the word is usually considered offensive.

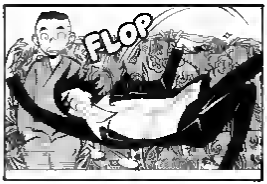

DIDN'T YOU TRY TO HELP THEM?

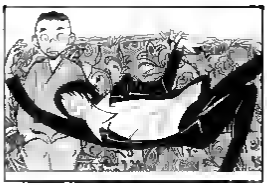

THAT'S HORRIBLE

SHAKE
NO WAY, I'D GET THE SHIT BEATEN OUT OF ME!

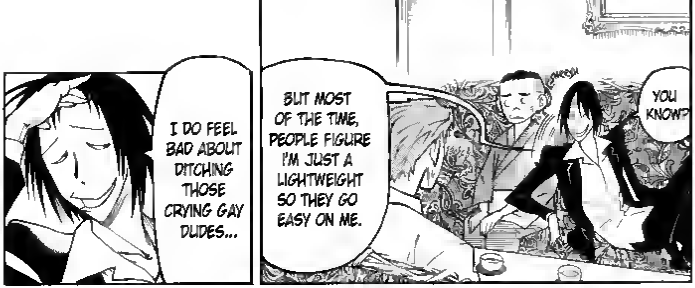
I KEEP MY HAIR LONG SO PEOPLE WILL THINK I LOOK WEAK.
WELL, THAT'S WHY I QUIT, OBVIOUSLY.

BUT I THOUGHT YOU USED TO BE A COP.
I HAVE A DELICATE CONSTIO TUTION
YOU DIDN'T EVEN TRY?

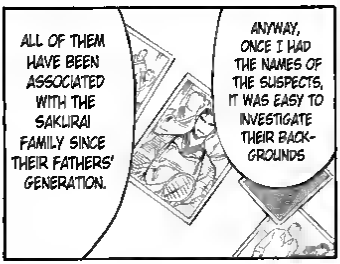

FLOP

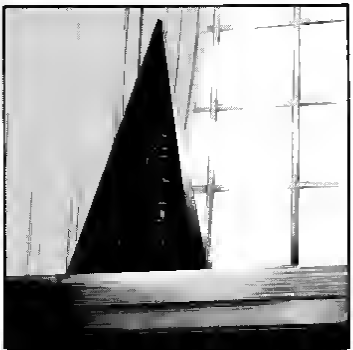


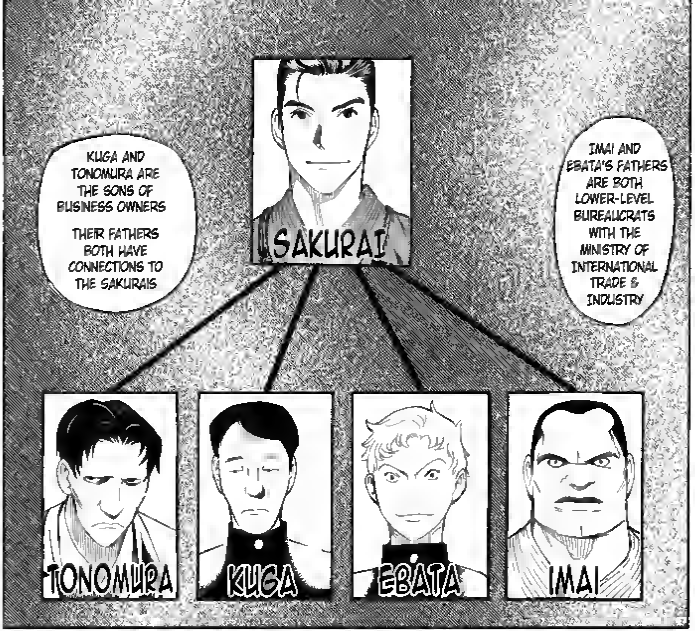
BUT THE TRUTH IS THAT I REALLY DO GO DOWN AFTER ONE PUNCH!
Ah~

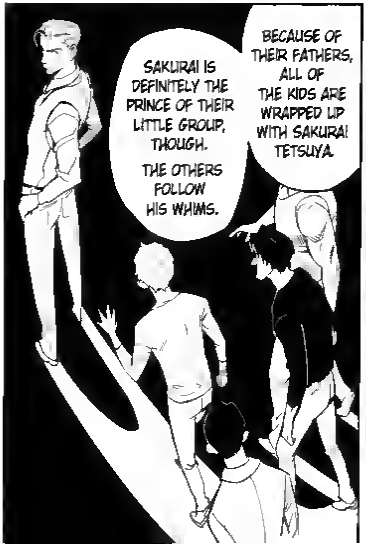

I DO FEEL BAD ABOUT DITCHING THOSE CRYING GAY DUDES...
BUT MOST OF THE TIME, PEOPLE FIGURE I'M JUST A LIGHTWEIGHT SO THEY GO EASY ON ME.
YOU KNOW?

I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM...?


ALL OF THEM HAVE BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE SAKURAI FAMILY SINCE THEIR FATHERS' GENERATION.
ANYWAY, ONCE I HAD THE NAMES OF THE SUSPECTS, IT WAS EASY TO INVESTIGATE THEIR BACK-GROUNDS



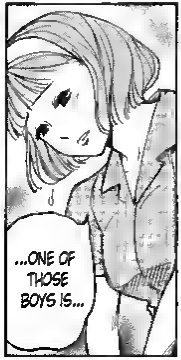

KUGA AND TONOMURA ARE THE SONS OF BUSINESS OWNERS
THEIR FATHERS BOTH HAVE CONNECTIONS TO THE SAKURAIS
SAKURAI
IMAI AND EBATA'S FATHERS ARE BOTH LOWER-LEVEL BUREAUCRATS WITH THE MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE & INDUSTRY
TONOMURA
KUGA
EBATA
IMAI


SAKURAI IS DEFINITELY THE PRINCE OF THEIR LITTLE GROUP, THOUGH.
THE OTHERS FOLLOW HIS WHIMS.
BECAUSE OF THEIR FATHERS, ALL OF THE KIDS ARE WRAPPED UP WITH SAKURAI TETSUYA.

BUT NOW THE GUY REPORTS DIRECTLY TO EBATA'S FATHER.

KUGA'S FATHER'S BUSINESS WAS ON THE BRINK OF BANKRUPTCY, BUT SAKURAI'S FATHER PULLED SOME STRINGS AT THE MINISTRY AND THE COMPANY WAS SAVED.

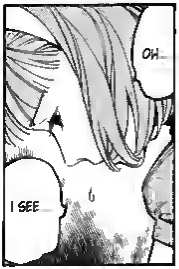
THAT'S RIGHT... ONE OF THEM IS KOZUE'S FATHER.


...ONE OF THOSE BOYS IS...

THOSE BASTARDS USED SANAE AS THEIR PLAYTHING...
.....

UNFORTUNATELY, THERE'S NO WAY OF KNOWING WHICH OF THEM FATHERED YOUR CHILD
THEY ALL HAVE THE SAME BLOOD TYPE

I GUESS IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER WHICH OF THEM IS THE FATHER, THOUGH
ANYWAY
YOU SHOULD DEMAND A PUBLIC APOLOGY!
WHAT THOSE BRATS DID WAS UNFORGIVABLE!

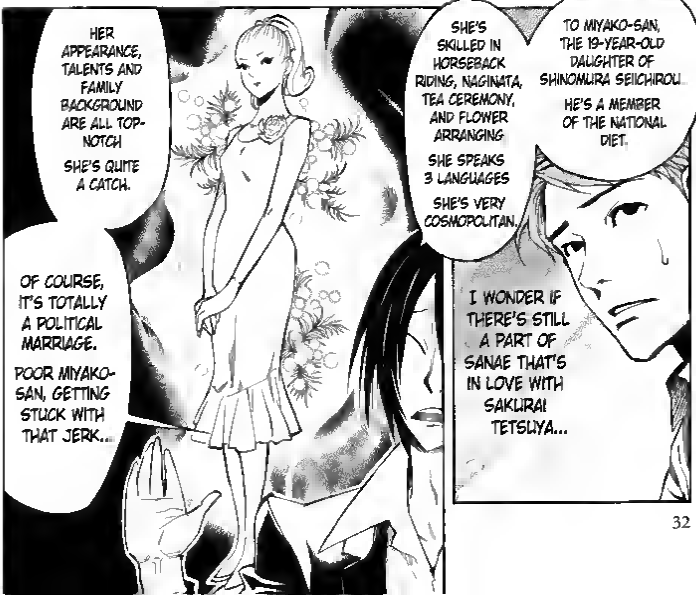

OH...
I SEE...

YOU SEE...
SAKURAI TETSUYA IS GETTING MARRIED.

WHY NOT SAKURAI?
...TRUST ME, HE'S NOT A GUY YOU WANT TO MESS WITH RIGHT NOW
IT'S TOO DANGEROUS

BUT YOU PROBABLY WON'T GET APOLOGIES OUT OF ALL OF THEM.
THE OTHER FOUR, MAYBE, BUT NOT SAKURAI.

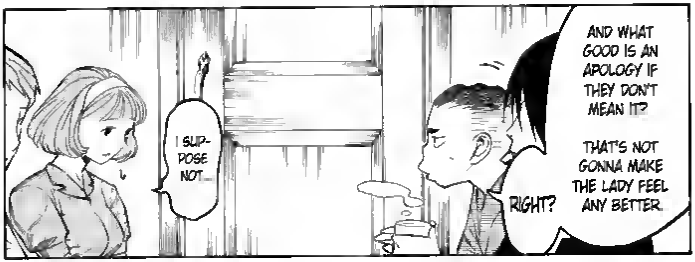
MAR-
RIED...?
BUT TO
WHOM?

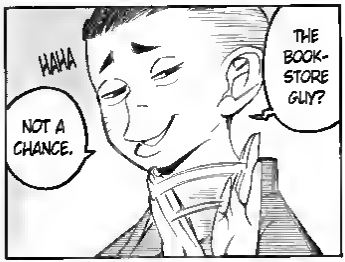

TO MIYAKO-SAN, THE 19-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER OF SHINOMURA SEIICHIROU.
HE'S A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL DIET.
SHE'S SKILLED IN HORSEBACK RIDING, NAGINATA, TEA CEREMONY, AND FLOWER ARRANGING.
SHE SPEAKS 3 LANGUAGES.
SHE'S VERY COSMOPOLITAN.
I WONDER IF THERE'S STILL A PART OF SANAE THAT'S IN LOVE WITH SAKURAI TETSUYA...
HER APPEARANCE, TALENTS AND FAMILY BACKGROUND ARE ALL TOP-NOTCH.
SHE'S QUITE A CATCH.
OF COURSE, IT'S TOTALLY A POLITICAL MARRIAGE.
POOR MIYAKO-SAN, GETTING STUCK WITH THAT JERK...

ANYWAY, THE FAMILY DOESN'T WANT A SCANDAL SPOILING THE WEDDING.
SO THEY'RE AGGRESSIVELY SUPPRESSING ANY RUMORS ABOUT TETSUYA'S NIGHTTIME ACTIVITIES
THEY'LL USE ANY MEANS NECESSARY TO ERASE THE EVIDENCE OF HIS MISDEEDS
THAT'S PROBABLY WHY SANAE-SAN'S PARENTS WERE TURNED AWAY SO HARSHLY.
THE SAKURAI FAMILY HAD JUST MADE THE MARRIAGE PROPOSAL.

THAT BAS-TARD...
SO YOU MIGHT AS WELL GIVE UP ON SAKURAI.
HIS FAMILY IS TRYING TO DO SOME SERIOUS SOCIAL CLIMBING.
BUT YOU CAN STILL GET APOLOGIES FROM THE OTHER FOUR...

IT'S NOT THAT EASY, MASUDA-KUN.
THE BABY IS SOUND ASLEEP.
SHE'S REALLY CUTE
THANK YOU!
ONLY AN IDIOT LIKE YOU WOULD EXPECT HER TO JUST FORGET ABOUT HIM.


I SUPPOSE NOT...
AND WHAT GOOD IS AN APOLOGY IF THEY DON'T MEAN IT?
THAT'S NOT GONNA MAKE THE LADY FEEL ANY BETTER, RIGHT?


HAHA
NOT A CHANCE.
THE BOOK-STORE GUY?

WHY DON'T WE ASK CHUUZENJI-SAN TO HELP?
HEY, I'VE GOT AN IDEA!

IF WE BEG CHUUZENJI-SAN, HE'LL SCARE THOSE BRATS STRAIGHT!

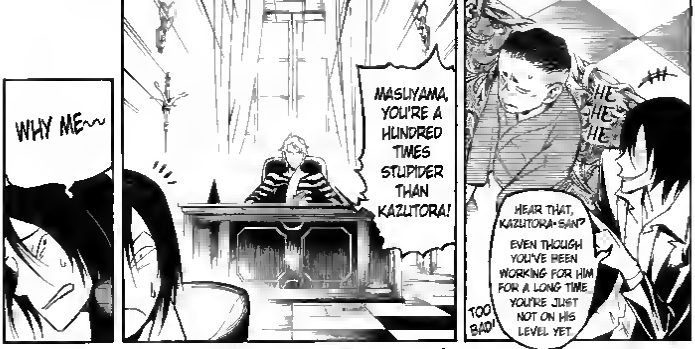
YEAH! COME ON, LET'S ASK HIM!
BUT I BET HE'D BE WILLING TO TEACH A COUPLE OF PUNKS A LESSON .

WHO ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT?
WHY NOT?
BECAUSE HE'S AN OLD STICK-IN THE-MUD.

BUT STILL...
FOR SANAE'S SAKE, I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING... APOLOGIES AREN'T ENOUGH...
HE MUST BE A SCARY OLD MAN...
EHP
OH!
CHUUZENJI-SAN RUNS A BOOKSTORE OUT IN NAKANO, AND HE'S ALSO A SHINTO PRIEST.
HE AND ENOKIZU-SAN ARE OLD FRIENDS.
FOOLS!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?
SHOUT

SHOUT
THAT'S RIGHT!
I'M THE MAN YOU'VE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR:
ENOKIZU REIJIROU!
AND THESE TWO ARE IDIOTS!!
OH... YOU MUST BE ENO...

NOW, MASUYAMA, YOU'RE MY SERVANT, SO CEASE YOUR SENSELESS PRATTLE!!
SMACK
MY NAME IS MASU-DA
YOU LACK THE CONVICTION NECESSARY TO BE A GOOD DETECTIVE!
FOOL!!
AND YOU KAZUTORA, YOU'RE TOO QUICK TO SAY THAT SOMETHING IS IMPOSSIBLE!
YOUR BRAIN IS LIKE A POT ON A STOVE!
IF YOU BOIL IT TOO QUICKLY, THE CONTENTS WILL EVAPORATE!
D
LOA
WHAT THE .
HE'S ALMOST TOO PRETTY TO BE A MAN...
BUT...
SO BOW DOWN BEFORE ME AND PRE-PARE TO BE EDUCATED!!
WHAT'S WITH THIS GUY?
...


WHY ME~~
MASUYAMA, YOU'RE A HUNDRED TIMES STUPIDER THAN KAZUTORA!
HE HE HE
HEAR THAT, KAZUTORA-SAN? EVEN THOUGH YOU'VE BEEN WORKING FOR HIM FOR A LONG TIME, YOU'RE JUST NOT ON HIS LEVEL YET.
TOO BAD!

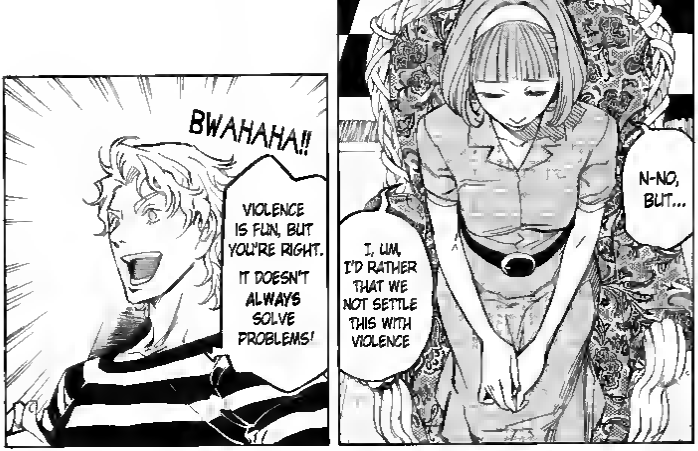
EH?
AND WHY THE MAN NEXT TO HER IS ANGRY!
I'LL TELL YOU WHY THAT WOMAN LOOKS SO SAD,
SILENCE, FOOL!

DARK-NESS!!
...
I SEE... DARKNESS.
STARE
?
?
?

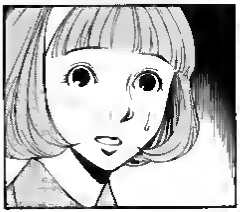
POINT
eeh~
YOU'RE A SUPER-IDIOT!
YOU SHOULD APOLOGIZE FOR YOUR STUPIDITY!
IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE AN IDIOT!
WHAT DID I DO WRONG, BOSS?
YOU SHOULD OFFER HER AN EYE FOR AN EYE!
A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH!
NOW THAT'S JUSTICE!!
LOOKING INTO HER MEMORIES?
IS HE...

COME ON, THIS ISN'T SOME KIND OF PERIOD DRAMA
WE CAN'T JUST KILL THEM.
I SAID "AN EYE FOR AN EYE," NOT MURDER!
YOUR BRAIN IS LIKE AN EMPTY POT, MASUYAMA!!
IT'S MY DUTY TO PROTECT THE GOOD AND PUNISH THE BAD!
WE NEED TO PUNISH THE EVILDOERS!
THE ONES YOU ABANDONED!
WHAT KIND OF MAN DOESN'T DEFEND A WOMAN?
YOU SHOULD BE ASHAMED!
SHEESH, I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THOSE GAY GUYS
I'LL NEED TO TAKE REVENGE FOR THOSE OTHER LADIES, TOO
OTHER LADIES?
DEMANDING AN APOLOGY IS A START, BUT IT'S JUST NOT ENOUGH.
HM, WHAT SHOULD I DO?
I HATE THINGS LIKE THIS!
I HATE THEM MORE THAN CAKE THAT'S GONE STALE!
I HATE THEM MORE THAN CRICKETS!

hmph!
I HAVE VERY HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR MY APPRENTICES!
OH, COME ON, SERIOUSLY?
YOU SHOULD HAVE HEROICALLY TAKEN THE BLOWS FOR THEM!
AND WHAT ABOUT YOU?
YES, YOU.
E...EH!?
WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT ALL OF THIS?
WELL, UM...
sweat
sweat
NEVER MIND, NO ONE CARES WHAT YOU THINK.
YOU'RE NOT MY CLIENT - SHE IS.
SO WHAT ABOUT YOU, MISS?
WOULD A HALFHEARTED APOLOGY BE ENOUGH FOR YOU?


BWAHAHA!!
VIOLENCE IS FUN, BUT YOU'RE RIGHT. IT DOESN'T ALWAYS SOLVE PROBLEMS!
I, UM, I'D RATHER THAT WE NOT SETTLE THIS WITH VIOLENCE
N-NO, BUT...

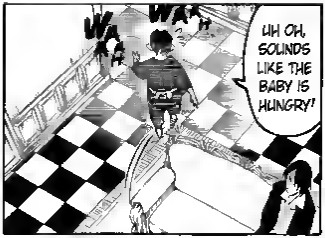
HMM, THIS IS GOING TO BE A CHALLENGE. WE NEED TO STRIKE BACK AT THEM IN A WAY THAT HURTS, BUT WE CAN'T USE VIOLENCE.



WHAT WE NEED IS THE WRATH OF THE GODS!

WAIT, I NEVER EVEN INTRODUCED MYSELF...
THIS GUY IS WEIRD.
I GUESS OOKOUCHI WAS RIGHT...

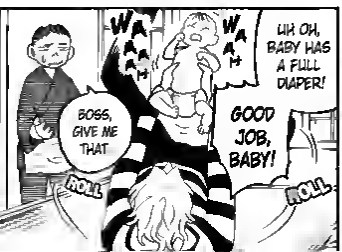
DASH


WAAH
WAAH
UH OH, SOUNDS LIKE THE BABY IS HUNGRY!

WAAH
WAAH

IT'S SO CUTE!!
KISS
KISS
THIS IS THE CUTEST BABY EVER!!
WAHAHAHA!!

IT'S A BABY!!


WAAAH
WAAH
UH OH, BABY HAS A FULL DIAPER!
BOSS, GIVE ME THAT
GOOD JOB, BABY!
ROLL
ROLL

WE'RE GOING TO FIND OURSELVES A GOD!
PLEASE EXCUSE ME!
SO CUTE~
GUNTA
fu fu fu
sweat
OKAY, LET'S GET TO WORK!
WE'LL GO VISIT KYOUGOKU'S BOOKSTORE AND ASK HIM TO HELP
ALL OF YOU CAN COME, EVEN THE IDIOTS!
YOU TOO, WHOEVER YOU ARE!